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LESSON LEARNED

PRIMARY DISCIPLINES

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Emergency Medical Services: Using Vehicles' Public Address Systems to Direct Victims at Incident Sites

SUMMARY

Emergency Medical Services (EMS) responders should consider using their vehicle's public address system to direct ambulatory victims to an appropriate triage location at an incident site. This can help EMS personnel quickly differentiate between ambulatory victims and those requiring additional assistance.

DESCRIPTION

On April 28, 2006, Volusia County, Florida, hosted a full-scale exercise (FSE) simulating simultaneous terrorist attacks on two cargo trains carrying hazardous materials (HazMat) through different parts of the county. The FSE was designed to improve cooperation among the 54 agencies likely to respond to a Volusia County terrorism rail incident. The FSE focused on HazMat response and the triage and treatment of victims at two railroad disaster scenes. EMS responders tested their ability to identify, to treat, and to transport large numbers of patients and casualties.

During the FSE, EMS responders at the incident sites approached each victim individually, assessed the extent of that person's injuries, and directed him or her to an appropriate triage location. This process took a large amount of time, placed unnecessary strain on response resources, and delayed the treatment of the most seriously injured victims. Following the FSE, Volusia County Emergency Management recommended that all EMS responders be thoroughly trained to use their vehicle's public address system to direct ambulatory patients to a designated area for treatment.

EMS responders should consider using their vehicle's public address system to direct ambulatory victims to an appropriate triage location at an incident site. This can help them quickly differentiate between ambulatory victims and those requiring additional assistance.

CITATION

Volusia County Emergency Management. *Volusia County Terrorism Rail Exercise: After-Action Report*. 09 Aug 2005.

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